



The members and staff of FAVI stop traffic for “White Cane Safety Day”

Traffic was a bit tied up on Friday morning in front of the PostKantoor in Oranjestad, but it was for a good cause. In observance of “White Cane Safety Day” the staff and clients of FAVI-the Aruba Foundation for the Visually Impaired, spent the morning demonstrating to drivers the courtesy of stopping at zebra walks so that pedestrians can cross. In particular, being courteous and observant enough to appreciate that those crossing are using a white cane, and that their right to walk and cross safely, should be respected.

In 2002, President George W. Bush declared October 15 official “White Can Safety Day” in the United States. He expressed in his official statement that “The white cane is a powerful symbol of independence and opportunity for visually impaired persons. It is also an essential tool for increasing mobility and productivity for those who are blind as well as those who suffer from severe visual impairment.”

Mieke de Droog, Director of FAVI, explained that of Aruba’s nearly 250 visually impaired individuals, only about twenty-five get about independently with a cane. Some do walk regularly and confidently, but most are afraid, and need training and public cooperation to achieve the task that will help them lead fuller, richer lives. Each year for the past five years, FAVI has chosen a different location for their demonstration and training of their clients in crossing the street, and this year the cross walk before the University of Aruba had particular significance. One of their clients works there as a gardener, and he walks to work, and crosses that walk every day.

Mieke de Droog expressed the hope that Friday’s exercise will make an impression on all the island and encourage their clients to conquer their fear, and boldly go where they have not gone before.